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A PECULIAR KIND OF PARONOMASIA IN THE TALMUD AND MIDRASH

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TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH BY P. VAN DEN BIESEN

GOD said to Abraham, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to tell them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. Gen. 15, 5. In the same manner we may say to a Talmud scholar: 'Try to fix the number of Tannaim and Amoraim that occur in both Talmuds, Baraitha, and the haggadic writings,' for their number is exceedingly great; nor is it easy to decide with certainty which particular saying each sage enunciated or which opinion he favored. Indeed, even as regards well known persons, whose names constantly recur in these different writings, it is obvious that the compilers did not always record with strict accuracy, who said this or who said that; who gave this explanation or who gave that. But, unless this point be ascertained from different documents, independent of each other, or from reliable parallel passages, we cannot be absolutely confident that the person, to whom the saying is attributed, is the author. Every Talmud student knows that an author is often deprived of his claim to a saying with which he had been credited, and that even the very names of sages are frequently open to dispute. I see no sufficient grounds for admitting that every age had its registrar whose business was to

record the opinions and expositions of the sages of his time, whether as regards the sayings in the Mishna and Baraitha, or as regards those in the Talmudim and Midrashim. Only sporadic notices are found of anything like records and chronicles, such as *מגילת הענינה, משנת דרבי* *עקיבא*, etc., and these were the sources of information for later compilers. But as the latter lived some centuries later than the authors of the Halakah and Haggadah, a perfect accuracy on all points would have been a superhuman achievement. No doubt, all possible care was taken as regards the sayings themselves, specially those of the Halakah (and yet, as Talmud scholars know, not even these are always free from inaccuracies); but the *names* of the sages were regarded as of minor importance, particularly in the case of non-halakic statements, and, therefore, cannot be held as incontrovertible. Now, of the above named works, the Mishna and Baraitha are almost the only ones wherein very frequently opinions are recorded *without* the names of those that advanced them, but in the remaining works comparatively few anonymous sayings occur. Sometimes also the name of the sage is very strange and uncommon.

I am of opinion that we should not always take these names in too serious a manner, and that often the name or surname of a sage *owes its origin to a peculiarity in the saying attributed to him*. For I was, more than once, forcibly struck by the marked resemblance which the name or surname of an author betrays to the saying assigned to him. But I would first like to show, by means of a few examples, that the compilers of the above-named works were not averse to the device of effecting a certain con-

sonance or harmony of sound between the names of sages and their sayings.

In the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98*b*, and in the Midrash Rabba Eḳah, ch. I, § 51, the following passage occurs:

מה שמו (של משיח)? דבי רבי שילא אמרי שילה שמו שנאמר עד כי יבא שילה; דבי רבי ינאי אמרי ינן שמו שנאמר יהי שמו לעולם לפני שמש ינן שמו, דבי רבי חנינה אמרי חנינה שמו שנאמר אשר לא אתן לכם חנינה:

What is the name of the Messiah?—The followers of Rabbi *Shila* say: *Shiloh* is his name, because it is written, Until *Shiloh* come (Gen. 49, 10). The followers of Rabbi *Jannai* say: *Jinnon* is his name, because it is written, May his name endure forever, may it continue (*jinnon*) as long as the sun (Ps. 72, 17). The followers of Rabbi *Haninah*, say *Haninah*, for it is written: I will show you no favor (*haninah*) (Jer. 16, 13). Rashi already observed as regards ינן שמו (Sanhedrin, *ibidem*) that ינן greatly resembles ינאי; and so we may infer from this passage that there were three schools that gave the Messiah (משיח) a name similar to that of their master.

In the Babylonian Talmud (Berakot 39*b*) a discussion is recorded between two sages whether the larger of two loaves, though a piece be cut off from it, should be used by preference for the blessing ברכת המוציא. In the midst of this discussion someone reminds Rabbi Naḥman bar Isaac of a Baraitha, containing a compromise between the two opinions; viz. מניח הפרוסה תחת השלמה ובוזע, 'If there be two loaves, a larger one with a piece cut off, and a smaller one; both loaves should be taken while the blessing is said.' Thereupon Rabbi Naḥman asked the person who gave the quotation, to tell his name. He replied, שלמן

Shalman. Then said R. Naḥman: Thou art שלום ('peace') and your citation is שלמה ('peaceful'), for thou hast reconciled two sages.

It may appear, at first sight, strange that Rabbi Naḥman bar Isaac should not have heard of Rabbi Shalman. For, according to *Seder ha-Dorot*, Book III, (Warsaw 1897), Rabbi Naḥman was the head of the college at Pumbeditha after the death of Raba רבא. Now, R. Shalman is named before Raba in the Babylonian Talmud, Beṣah 5*b*, where his opinion, though based on different grounds, is said to agree with that of Raba, but to be opposed to that of other scholars. R. Shalman, therefore, was older than Raba, because the Talmud on the whole takes account of the chronological order when recording different opinions. Yet, it remains possible that R. Naḥman did not know his name, for as appears from the last named passage, he came from a different place. Again, there is the other alternative that R. Naḥman knew R. Shalman's name, and that his question merely served to elicit an answer; just as for instance Rab acted towards Karna: Shabbat 108*a*.

But be this as it may, Rabbi Naḥman bar Isaac playfully alludes to the meaning of R. Shalman's name, which signifies *peace*, because the latter had effected a compromise between two conflicting opinions. Undoubtedly the phrase שלמה משנתך is an allusion to the term שלמה, occurring in the Baraita and cited by R. Shalman.

It is possible, moreover, that the name of R. Shalman, which seldom is found in the Talmud, owes in some manner or other its origin to the passage תרנמה רב שלמן בששניהם רוצים, Baba Batra 13*b*. For, if both sides acquiesce, there is agreement, concord, שלום. And the same

remark applies to the saying of R. Shalman as regards Abaye in Baba Ḳamma 89a.

Let me add the well known saying of R. Pappe, addressed to R. Bebe bar Abaye, or that of Huna, the son of Joshua, addressed to Raba רבא, which occurs several times in the Talmud.

משום דאתית ממלאי אמריתו מילי דמולייחא

‘Because thou hailest from ממלא (others understand this differently; see Rashi, Rashbam, and Aruk, s. v. מל VII), thou sayest, etc.’

It appears, therefore, to me that connection and similarity between the name of an author (or of his birth-place) and the saying attributed to him were liked and appreciated by the redactors of the Talmud and Midrash. And proceeding on this basis, I think, I have discovered in this peculiar use of paronomasia the clue to the explanation of the origin of several names in the halakic and haggadic works, but especially in the latter.

1. In the passage:

רבי יהושע אומר אף הישועה שנאמר וכו'

Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob on Ps. 18, 35, the name of Rabbi Joshua seems to have been suggested by the words אף הישועה. From the context we know that one of the Amoraim is speaking; and Amoraim with the name Joshua always have in addition either a surname or a father's name. My conjecture is confirmed by Yalkuṭ, Genesis, ch. 10, where we find the words וכן הישועה anonymously recorded.

Once the words אף הישועה had occurred in Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob (quoted above) as the saying of Rabbi Joshua, we find that in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 6, a father is given to him; and he is now called Rabbi Joshua son of

Rabbi Nehemiah; so also in Midrash Rabba, Lev., ch. 35. His name again occurs with a fresh addition in Midrash Shoḥer Tōb, on Ps. 80 (the beginning), viz. Rabbi Joshua ha-Kohen son of Rabbi Nehemiah. And finally, we come across his name in Yalkuṭ, II Sam., ch. 162, with the following modification, Rabbi Joshua bar Naḥmani (no doubt an imitation of the name Samuel bar Naḥmani), unless, as the author of *Sepher Yoḥasin* thinks, he is to be identified with the above named Rabbi Samuel's brother whom, however, the writer of *Seder ha-Dorot* could nowhere find.

2. In Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 84, we read:

בִּיצְחָק לֹא שָׁמְעֵנוּ וְהִכֵּן שָׁמְעֵנוּ? רַבִּי יִצְחָק וְתַאֲנִי לֵה מִשּׁוֹם ר' הוֹשִׁיעִיא
רַבֵּה בִשֵּׁם ר' יְהוּדָה בֶּר סִימֹן כֹּאן כְּתִיב וְכוּ'.

The same saying occurs anonymously in Yalkuṭ, ch. 140. Probably it was assigned to Rabbi Isaac because it deals exclusively with the Patriarch Isaac.

3. A similar instance we find in the following passage, Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 92:

אָמַר ר' בְּנִימֵן לִפִּי שֶׁשָּׁמְעֵנוּ חֲנִינָה בִּי"א שְׁבָטִים וְלֹא שָׁמְעֵנוּ חֲנִינָה בִּשְׁבַט
בְּנִימֵן

The saying also recurs anonymously in Yalkuṭ, Gen., chaps. 133, 150. Nowhere, moreover, is Rabbi Benjamin mentioned without a surname or father's name. Thus the conjecture is obvious that the saying was attributed to a sage named Rabbi Benjamin, because it contained something to the credit of the Patriarch Benjamin.

It should be noticed that in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 78, the same saying is quoted with the name of the well known Rabbi Benjamin affixed to it.

4. It is probably not a mere coincidence that in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 98, the following phrase is found in connection with I Chron. 5, 14.

אמר רבי יהושע ב"ר נחמיה בימי שואל זה יהושע

See further our note concerning Rabbi Joshua bar Nehemiah, § 1.

5. We read in Midrash Rabba, Ex., ch. 1, on 1, 21:

ויעש להם בתים רב ולוי חר אמר בתי כהונה ולויה וח"א בתי מלכות
 "Rab and *Levi* dispute the meaning of the term *Houses*. The one maintains that these 'houses' are families of priests and *Levites*, the other that they are dynasties of kings."

In the same Midrash Rabba, ch. 48, a portion of this passage is quoted but anonymously and without the word ולויה, viz.

ומה היו הבתים? בית הכהונה ובית המלכות

"and what are these houses? a sacerdotal family and a royal dynasty".

We find something similar in Siphre, section ב'העלותך, § 78.

Also in Soṭah 11b, difference of opinion is expressed on this point, but there the disputants are, instead of Rab and *Levi*, Rab and *Samuel*, whose statements on the whole are identical with those in Midrash Rabba, Ex., ch. 1. No doubt, the reading of the Babylonian Talmud is the correct one, for the subject treated of in Ex., ch. 1, occasioned several other discussions between Rab and *Samuel*. In Soṭah 11a and 11b, some of their differences are mentioned and one of them is spoken of also in Erubin 53a. Both Rab and *Samuel* again take part in the same discussion in Midrash Rabba, Exodus. Finally, in Soṭah, quoted above, *Samuel* is one of the principal exponents of Exodus, chap. 1.

The question now arises how shall we in the passage quoted first, viz. Midrash Rabba, Exodus, chap. 1, account

for the name *Levi*, the name of a scholar who, especially on halakic subjects, is often in conflict with Rab? The answer is obvious. *Levi* is a mistake for Samuel; and this mistake was occasioned by the word לויה, occurring along with the word בתי כהונה.

6. In Midrash Rabba, Exodus, ch. 51, we read on 33, 8:

והביטו אחרי משה אמר רבי חמא היו אומרים חמאי קדל וכו'

In the same place a different explanation is given of this verse by Rabbi Joḥanan. Both opinions are anonymously quoted in the Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 4, 13 and Bikkurim 3, 3. Moreover, in the Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 33*b*, and in Yalkuṭ, Exodus, ch. 393, the saying of Rabbi Ḥama (רבי חמה) is attributed to Rabbi Amme (רבי אמי). Now, if we take into consideration that Rabbi Ḥama is very seldom, perhaps never, mentioned without his father's name (for Rabbi Ḥama, the principal of the school at Nehardea, 357-372 C. E., is always called רב חמא מנהרעא Sanhedrin 17*b*), the name Amme would seem to be the true reading and the name Ḥama to be a mistake occasioned by its similarity with חמי.

7. In Midrash Rabba, Exodus, chap. 41, and Leviticus, chap. 35, we read:

אמר רבי יוחנן נ' ניתנו מתנה לעולם

But Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 6, and Yalkuṭ, II Sam., ch. 162, have the reading רבי יוחנן, Rabbi Joḥanan, while in Midrash Shoḥer Tob on Ps. 18, 35, and in Yalkuṭ, Gen. ch. 10, and *ibidem*, Leviticus, ch. 671, the passage occurs anonymously. The probable explanation is that the name Jonathan was suggested to the scribe by the word ניתנו מתנה, all three words being derived from the same stem נתן.

The two names Jonathan and Joḥanan were confounded; a not uncommon error in the Talmud.

8. It cannot well be the work of chance that in Midrash Rabba, Numbers, where frequently subjects are discussed touching the tribe *Levi*, several sayings are attributed to the well known Rabbi Joshua ben *Levi* and to Rabbi Jehudah ben *Levi*, the latter of whom seldom occurs save a few times in chaps. 3, 4, and 7.

9. Nor can it be regarded a pure coincidence that Rabbi Berechiah רבי ברכיה is the principal speaker in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 39, where the blessings ברכות of Abraham, Gen. 12, 2, 3, and those of Isaac, Gen., 27, 28, are discussed.

So also in Yalkuṭ, where names of authors are scarce, Rabbi Berechiah is mentioned in the discussions on the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49), of the priests' blessing (Num. 6, 24), and of the blessing of Moses (Deut. 34).

10. In Midrash Rabba, Song of Songs, 8, 11, we read:

ר' יודן כשם ר' איני מלאכי צבאות אין כתיב כאן וכי

I cannot find the name איני elsewhere. It possibly is the name of the sage called איניא in the Jerusalem Talmud, Giṭṭin 1, 5, who appears to have been a pupil of Rabbi Joḥanan. But it is more probable that it was a clerical error for איבו, a name which occurs in Midrash Rabba, Ecclesiastes, 9, 11, in Midrash Samuel, ch. 17 (towards the end), in Pesikṭa de Rabbi Kahana, p. 45^b, in Yalkuṭ, Exodus, ch. 362 (towards the end), and *ibidem*, Psalms, ch. 795. Assuming איני to be a mistake for איבו, it was undoubtedly occasioned by the words אין כתיב כאן, for they are omitted in Midrash Rabba, Num., ch. 11, where, moreover, instead of the name איני we find איבו.

11. A clerical error of the same kind is found in

Midrash Rabba, Ruth, ch. 5, § 4, on Ruth 2, 12:

א"ר חסא אשר באת לחסות וכו'

In Pesikṭa de Rabbi Kahana the name is יוסי, and there the editor (S. Buber) already pointed out that חסא in Midrash Rabba was a printer's error, though in my opinion the mistake was made by the scribe. But how did this mistake happen? Probably, it is due to resemblance of חסא to לחסות and to the term חסין which is a few times repeated in this passage.

12. In Midrash Rabba, Eḳah, ch. 1, on Lam. 1, 1, we read:

היתה כאלמנה א"ר אבא בר כהנא הם לא פלשו וכו', דרך קשתו כאויב (Lam. 2, 4)
אויב אין כתיב כאן אלא כאויב, היה ה' כאויב (Lam. 2, 5)
אויב אין כתיב כאן אלא כאויב וכו'

In this passage, the haggadic interpretation of the three verses, Lam. 1, 1 and 2, 4. 5, is attributed to the well known Rabbi Abba bar Kahana. All the same, ר' איבו also appears as author of the remarks on Lam. 2, 4. 5. If we consider that both verses contain the term אויב 'enemy,' and that as well the name איבו as the term אויב is derived from the root איב 'to be hostile,' and that, on the contrary אבא means 'father,' it is obvious that here the name איבו owes its origin to the word אויב. Furthermore, it should be noticed that in Yalkuṭ, Hosea, ch. 521, all the three observations are attributed to ר' איבו.

13. Rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai is credited in the tractate Berakot, with several haggadic comments. But among them there is one on Ps. 3, 1

מוזמר לדוד בברחו מפני אבשלום בנו

'A psalm of David, when he fled from *Absalom* his son,' which is attributed to Rabbi Simon ben Absalom

both here and in Yalkuṭ, Ps. 3, 1, though in 'En Jacob, Berakot, *ibidem*, the same is again assigned to Rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai.

It is evident that the name Rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai is correct and that the scribe substituted that of Absalom, because the verse, commented on, mentions the flight of David before *Absalom*. And of this I am convinced despite the fact that Absalom is the paternal name of several scholars, e. g. Nathan ben Absalom (Berakot 22a), Ḥanan ben Absalom (Mishna Ketubot 13, 1, cf. Tosafot, *ibidem*, p. 104b), and Rabbi Simon ben Absalom (Megillah 14a).

14. In Yoma 69b we read:

ואמר רב גידל שגדלו בשם המפורש

And a little further:

במערבא מתנו הכי רב גידל אמר גדול שגדלו בשם המפורש

"In Palestine they teach: Rabbi Giddel says, etc." where no doubt we have an allusion to a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud, Megillah, ch. 3 (towards the end). And again in the same tractate Yoma, but a little higher, we read:

רב גידל אמר ברוך ה' אלהי ישראל וכו'

An exposition of the difficulties in this paragraph we find in the commentaries of 'En Jacob, *ibidem*. As for the variants, in the three passages quoted, they may be removed by reading:

ואמר רב שגדלו בשם המפורש

which is the text in Masseket Soferim, ch. 13, § 8. The name גידל probably owes its origin to the word שגדלו and its insertion into the sentence is all the more intelligible as Rabbi Giddel was the disciple of Rab.

15. Something similar we find in the Jerusalem Talmud, tract. Sukkah 5, and in Yalkuṭ, Jonah, ch. 550:

א"ר יונה יונה מעולי רגלים היה ג'וכי

In *Seder ha-Dorot*, s. v. יונה, where the passages containing Rabbi Jonah's name are registered, this particular phrase is omitted. It is obvious, therefore, that in the citation given above, the scribe makes Rabbi *Jonah* say something concerning the prophet *Jonah* which was in reality a saying of Rab or more probably of Rabbi.

16. We read in Shabbat 22a:

רב שמואל מדיפתי אמר משמאל

The name of Rabbi Samuel of Difte does not occur elsewhere, but the name of Rabbi Jeremiah of Difte is found in the Talmud, and to him is attributed the saying in Sheeltot de Rabbi Aḥai, section ויישלה, ch. 26. It is evident that the name שמואל here is due to the saying משמאל.

17. In Baba Meṣia 25a, we read:

א"ר יצחק מנרלאה והוא שעשין כמנרלים

It is most probable that the surname Magdala'a מנרלאה was occasioned by the word כמנרלים. The explanation itself, no doubt, was taken from the Baraitha, which is subsequently quoted to confirm it. I am aware that the name Rabbi Isaac Magdala'a occurs a few times in the Talmud, viz. Yoma 81b, Shabbat 139a, Niddah 27b, 33a. It is also found in the Midrash, e. g. Gen. rabba, ch. 98 (towards the end), Num. rabba, ch. 14, Gen. rabba, ch. 5, in a very difficult and obscure passage, which also occurs in Midrash Gen. rabba, ch. 20, where the word מנרלאה is omitted, and where the explanation of Rashi, containing the stem נרל, should be consulted. All the same, I think that in the above quoted passage, Baba Meṣia, the surname of Rabbi Isaac Magdala'a has its origin in the statement attributed to him, seeing that the name רבי יצחק, Rabbi

Isaac, is very conspicuous in the explanations in the first paragraphs of *Baba Meṣia*, ch. 2.

18. It is remarkable that the term ממל 'olive-press,' *Baba Batra* 67*b*, is explained by the sage ר' אבא בר ממל. He is three times mentioned in this tractate, but does not appear elsewhere in the 'Talmud. If those who identify him with רבי אבא, whose father's name is not stated, be right, the name ממל would seem to have been added because of the term ממל 'olive-press.'

19. In the same tractate 90*b* we read that Rabbi Jose bar Ḥanina said to פונא, his servant, פוק אצר וכו'. The correct name of the servant is very uncertain. *Sepher Yoḥasin* has the reading סונא. The Munich manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud (see *Dikduke Sofrim* on this passage) also has סונא, and there, moreover, it appears that the Hamburg manuscript and the Pesaro edition read, הונא. Is it not probable, therefore, that the name פונא in our edition was suggested by the term פוק?

20. The Babyl. Talmud, *Berakot* 53*b*, contains in the *Baraitha*, שמן מעכב את הכרכה, some very strange names of Tannaites, viz. ר' זילאי and ר' זויאי, names which greatly resemble each other and do not occur elsewhere in the Talmud. After their names we meet with the following passage:

ר' זוהמאי אומר בשם שמזוהם פסול לעבודה כן ידים מזוהמות פסולים לברכה

The purport of this saying agrees with that of Rabbi Aḥa and Rabbi Zilai, *ibidem*. The name of its author, however, does not occur elsewhere (perhaps it is implied in the saying of Rabbi Naḥman bar Isaac). Is it not obvious that the name זוהמאי, which is not very pleasing to the ear, was

given to him because of its affinity to the stem **זהם**, which occurs twice in this passage?

21. In Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 18, we read:

רבי איבו ואמרי לה בשם ר' בנייה והוא חני לה בשם רבי שמעון
בן יוחאי קישטא וכו' אית אתרין דקריין לקלעתא בנייתא :

This statement occurs a few times in the Babylonian Talmud, e. g. Shabbat 96a, Berakot 61a, Erubin 18a, Niddah 46b, but always as of Rabbi Simon ben Menashya. The name **בנייה**, in the passage quoted, is no doubt fictitious, and was suggested by the word **בנייתא**, which is the principal word in the whole sentence, and which is used to explain **ויבן**, Gen. 2, 22.

22. In Midrash Rabba, Ex., ch. 21, we find several expositions in connection with the phrase **מה תצעק אלי** Ex. 14, 15. Among others the passage:

ר' עקיבא אומר בזכות יעקב אני קורע להם הים שנאמר ופרצת ימה וכו' (Gen. 28, 14)

But in Yalkut, ch. 120, we find that, on this passage from Gen., Rabbi Abba bar Hanina says:

את תרעא דימא שנאמר ופרצת ימה וכו'

In Yalkut, Micah, ch. 551, the same statement is assigned to Rabbi Jose bar Kahana on the authority of Rabbi Abba bar Hanina, and in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 69, the passage is attributed to Rabbi Abba bar Kahana.

How then can we account for the name of Rabbi Akiba in Midrash Rabba, Exodus? Rabbi Akiba cannot have heard what he says from R. Abba, who lived long after him. No doubt his name is due to its resemblance to the name **יעקב**, which occurs in the same passage.

23. In the same manner, we can account for the reading **בן סירטא** in Shabbat 104b:

א"ל ר' אליעזר לחכמים והלא בן סירטא הוציא כשפים ממצרים

For in Tosefta, Shabbat, ch. 12 (edition Zuckermann), the name is **בן סטודא**, Ben Satoda (see Blau, *Altjüdisches Zauberwesen*, 41, n. 1); and so also in the Jerusalem Talmud, Yebamot 16, 6; but the name is omitted in the parallel passage, Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 7, 12. The explanation of this mistake is that in tract. Shabbat, quoted above, there is mention made of **סריטה על בשרו**.

24. It cannot be pure coincidence that the words **אשר לא יקים** Deut. 27, 26, in the Jerusalem Talmud, Soṭah 7, 4, are explained by one called **רבי שמעון בן יקים**, who is very seldom or perhaps never heard of again. He is probably to be identified with Rabbi Simon ben Eliakim, whose name occurs a few times in the Talmud (this passage is quoted by Nahmanides on Deut., *ibidem*).

25. This desire for paronomasia may also account for the use of some very rare and uncommon words. We read in the Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 71a:

פירש יהודה בן נקוסא לפני רבי זה פירש וזה לא פירש

How shall we account, in the Babylonian Talmud, for the use of the genuine old Hebrew word **פירש**, with the meaning *to explain*, which is already found in Num. 15, 34? **אמר**, which is also Aramaic, was the verb one would have expected, or if the idea of elucidation was insisted upon, the word **תרנמא**. No doubt the scribe, in selecting the word **פירש**, was led by his love of paronomasia. Its connection with the phrase, in which it occurs, is obvious.

26. The same fondness for paronomasia may have led writers to modernize certain names. I refer to a passage in Midrash Rabba, Num., ch. 7:

א"ר יודה א"ר סימון מנין שלא..... היה בהן סומין וכו'

whereas in the same place, ch. 13, we read:

תאני בשם ר' שמעון בן יוחאי בשעת שעמדו וכו' לא סומים וכו'

And so the passage is found also in Midrash Rabba, Song of Songs, ch. 4, § 7. Now, it is well known that Rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai, in the Talmud and Mishna, is commonly called Rabbi Simon. In the first of the two citations, therefore, ר' סימון can be no one else but ר' שמעון, named in the second. As, moreover, the prevalent diction in Midrash Rabba, Numbers, is on the whole tolerably pure Hebrew, there is no reason why the name Rabbi Simon should have been Hellenized, and spelled סימון, except for its resemblance to the word סומין, occurring in the same phrase.

27. In some instances, it would seem, the process is reversed, and sayings are recorded, because they contain words resembling the name of the person who is treated of. Thus we read in Soṭah 41b:

אר"ש בן חלפתא מיום שנבר אנרופה של חנופה וכו'

How shall we account for the word אנרופה 'fist'?—Now and then we find in the Talmud the expression בעלי אנרופין 'violent men,' lit. 'men of the fist,' a kind of synecdoche for בעלי זרוע 'men of the arm'; e. g. Sanhedrin 21a. Such also is the explanation of Rashi, viz. כחה 'power.' But why is not the more common term used; or, rather, why not simply write: מיום שנברה חנופה 'from the day that hypocrisy increased,' after the manner of several sayings which occur at the end of this treatise?—The answer is obvious. The term אנרופה is advisedly chosen, because there is question here of king אנריפס.

28. In a similar manner we may account for a statement occurring in Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 85.

א"ר ברכיה מברכתא היתה יוצאת וכו'

Rashi explains שיירא by מברכתא 'caravan.' שיירא, sometimes also סיעתא, is the more common word for cara-

van. Whether מברכתא occurs elsewhere with this meaning I do not know. But here, I think, it is used because of its resemblance to the name of the speaker ר' ברכיה.

29. On the same principle a passage, occurring in the Babylonian Talmud, may be fitly explained: Nedarim 66b. In connection with a certain occurrence, we find the following remark:

הוה יתיב בבא בן בוטא אבבא וקא דאין דינא וכו'

Samuel Edels rightly observes that it is not clear why it is stated that Baba ben Bota was *seated at the door*. His explanation is that, though he was not seated at the door, he was not far from it, and that this vicinity made the woman think that he was referred to in the saying of her husband רישא דבבא. I, for one, thought that יתיב אבבא was a juridical phrase, not uncommon in the Talmud, and that בבא here is analogous to שער in Hebrew, which would obviate the difficulty raised by Samuel Edels. But if this were not so (and just now I cannot recollect a parallel instance, nor can I believe that it would have been unknown to such a Talmud-expert as Edels), then אבבא has been probably added by the scribe because of its similarity with the name בבא בן בוטא. I am confirmed in this opinion by the coincidence that the term אבבא does not occur in *Seder ha-Dorot*, where the incident is quoted.

I am bound, however, to point out that it is surprising to find here the name of Baba ben Bota, who, if we may rely on what is recorded in Baba Batra 3b, lived in the days of Herod. If, what is related of him, really took place, we would expect to find it mentioned in a Baraitha.

30. In Midrash Rabba, Lev., ch. i, we read:

ר' יששכר דכפר מנדי אמר כך יהא שכרן אין לשון ויקר וכו'

The same saying, but without the words **כך יהא שכרן** occurs in Yalkuṭ, Job, ch. 897. The name of Rabbi Issachar of Chephar-mande is more than once met with in the Midrash; e. g. Midrash Rabba, Esther, ch. 7. I am inclined to think that the scribe, who copied Midrash Rabba, Lev., was reminded by the name Issachar of the passage **נתן אלהים שכרי**, Gen. 30, 18, and thus was led to add the words, **כך יהא שכרן**.

31. Something similar must have happened in Midrash Rabba, Num., ch. 23; where we read:

ר' יהושע אומר נפלאות עשית, חירום נתת, ימינך הושע אותם וכו'

This saying occurs also in Midrash Yalkuṭ, Tehillim, ch. 818, but with the following variation:

ר' יהושע אומר נפלאות וכו' ים בקעת וכו'

The conjecture lies at hand that the speaker in Midrash Rabba, Num., while quoting a saying of Rabbi Joshua, wished to use a phrase resembling the latter's name. Perhaps, he was thinking at the time of Ps. 44, 4.

32. In some cases the scribe appears to have proceeded even further in this direction, and to have aimed at producing a similarity of *meaning* between the name of the speaker and some word or other occurring in his statement. An instance of this, I think, I have found in Baba Batra 119a, as regards the passage:

א"ר חירקא שמעון השקמוני היה לי חבר מתלמידי ר' עקיבא וכו'

This saying occurs also in Siphre, ch. 68, and 133 (Vienna 1864). The name Simon ha-Shikmoni does not seem to occur elsewhere. But according to another reading the name is **הקמשוני**. See *Dikduke Sofrim* on this place.

The uncertainty concerning the name of Rabbi Hidka is even greater. In some manuscripts the name is

missing. In others we find the name of ר' יהודה instead of Rabbi Ḥidka.

I think that the scribe, who took the surname to be קמשוני, invented the name רבי חירקא, or, *vice versa*, he, who read חירקא, altered שקמוני into קמשוני. For, as is known, חירקא or חרקא (Hebrew חרק) is the Aramaic word for *thorn*, and is equivalent to the Hebrew קמשון.

33. It is quite possible also that sometimes the name given to a sage was suggested by its resemblance to the subject or purport of a Bible-passage on which he had expressed an opinion. This thought occurred to me while reading a saying, contained in the Midrash of Rabbi Nehunya ben Haḥanah (a work unknown to me), and quoted by Nahmanides in his Commentary on Deut. 22, 6. 7. 'If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree, or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest prolong thy days.' The subject dealt with is the statute known as שלוח הקן, and in connection with it something is recorded on the authority of Rabbi רחמאי, a name which, as far as I know, does not occur elsewhere in Midrash or Talmud. If we further consider that the statute expresses a humane feeling towards animals (רחמים, see Mishna Berakot 5, 3, and Talmud Bab. *ibidem*, 33*b*), then it is quite obvious why the sage, who discussed this point, was called Rabbi רחמאי, i. e. 'mercy.'

34. Sometimes, it would seem, the name of a sage owes its origin to the *initial* letters of certain words con-

tained in his saying. An instance of this, I think, is found in Berakot 62b:

רב חנא בר אדא וכו' אמר אדמקיפנא אדרי איעול בהא

Though the name אדא repeatedly occurs in the Talmud, that of Rabbi Ḥana bar Ada is nowhere to be found. In the Babylonian Talmud, moreover, Megillah 29a, we find the same saying quoted on the authority of רבא. Is it not likely that the name of the sage was suggested to the scribe by the initial letters אד of the first two words in his saying?

35. We find another instance of this kind of paronomasia in Midrash Rabba, Deut., ch. 2, and in Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob, ch. 65.

ר' חנינא בר פפא שאל לר' שמואל בר נחמן מהו וכו' א"ל שערי תפלה
פעמים פתוחים פעמים נעולים

This saying is repeated in Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob, ch. 4, but without the words: בר פפא, viz.

ר' חנינא שאל לר' שמואל מהו סכותה בענן לך א"ל שערי תפלה פעמים
פתוחים פעמים נעולים

And again the same passage is found in Yalkuṭ, Tehillim, ch. 69, but there the name of the sage is entirely omitted.

It is well known that Rabbi Samuel bar Naḥman, in Midrash Rabba, Deut., ch. 2, is the same person as Samuel ben Naḥman in Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob, ch. 65, and that he is often called Samuel or Rabbi Samuel, without his paternal name; for instance in the second of the two citations given above. Now, Rabbi Papa lived a century after Rabbi Samuel, and, therefore, Rabbi Ḥanina, the son of Papa, could not have addressed a question to Rabbi Samuel. This difficulty is obviated by adopting the reading of Midrash Shoḥer Ṭob, ch. 4, because Rabbi Ḥanina

(the same as Ḥanina bar Ḥama) was, like Rabbi Samuel, a disciple of Rabbi Jehudah Hanasi.

But what induced the scribe, in the first of the above quoted citations, viz. *Midrash Rabba*, Deut., ch. 2, and *Shoḥer Tob*, ch. 65, to add the name פפא? A satisfactory answer is furnished by his love for paronomasia. The repetition of the letter פ in the words פעמים פתוחים suggested to him the name פפא.

36. In the same manner we may account for the name of Rabbi Papa in *Baba Ḳamma* 54b

אר" פפא פפונאי ידעי טעמא דהאי מילתא ומנו ר' אחא בר יעקב

'Rabbi Papa says: the Paponæans know best how to explain this. And whom do I mean?—I mean Rabbi Aḥa bar Jacob.'—Now, Rabbi Aḥa came from a place called Paponæ.

This statement is repeated in *Ḳiddushin* 35a, where it is attributed to Raba (רבא). And this is most likely the true reading. For, as we know from *B. Ḳamma* 40a, Raba was a great admirer of the learning of Rabbi Aḥa bar Jacob. No doubt the letters פפ in the word פפונאי led the scribe to attribute the saying to Rabbi Papa.

37. The same remark applies to the name Rabbi Ishmael, in *Midrash Rabba*, *Esther*, ch. 7.

אר" ישמעאל שמנה עשר אלף וד' מאות וכו'

The same passage recurs in *Yalkuṭ* but anonymously. I doubt whether the name Ishmael is found elsewhere in the *Midrash* in connection with a haggadic statement. It was probably suggested by the initial letters of the three words שמנה עשר אלף which, when joined together, produce the name ישמעאל. The letter י need not cause any difficulty when we recollect the derivation of the name

given in Gen. 16, 11. 'And thou shalt call his name Ishmael (God heareth) because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.'

38. There are also cases in which, it would seem, the process was reversed. The name of the sage induced the scribe to couch his saying in words in which the name might easily be recognized. An instance of this is given us in Midrash Rabba, Num., ch. 17.

אֲרִ' יִצְחָק יִצְתָה רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וכו'

The common phrase, in the Talmud, for expressing this saying, would have been: יִצְתָה בַת קוֹל. And so we find it in all places where the subject is treated to which the statement of Rabbi Isaac refers: Midrash Rabba, Gen., ch. 35; Yalkuṭ, Joshua, ch. 31, and Kings, ch. 193; Babylonian Talmud Moed Kāṭan 9a; comp. Shabbat 30b. The two passages in Yalkuṭ do not even contain the name of the sage. It is quite conceivable that a scribe, fond of paronomasia, seized the opportunity to remodel the saying of Rabbi Isaac, and to express it in words which reproduce the letters of his name.

39. Finally proceeding in the same direction, I think that in some cases the number of the ciphers, signified by the letters of an author's name, played an important part in the recording of his name and saying. An instance of this may be found in Midrash Rabba, Lev., ch. 16.

ר' אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּשֶׁם ר' יוֹסִי בֶן זִמְרָא אָמַר רַמ"ה אֵיבָרִים וכו'

Rabbi Jose ben Zimra is a well known personality in the haggadah. There is, moreover, often mention in the haggadah of the 248 members of the human body (Mishna Ohalot 18; comp. commentary of Rabbi Simson, *ibidem*). The passage quoted recurs in Midrash Yalkuṭ, Kōhelet, ch. 971. But there, ch. 878, on Ps. 120, the

words רמ"ח איברים are omitted, just as in the Babylonian Talmud, Arakin 15*b*, where several other sayings of Rabbi Jose ben Zimra are recorded.

The inference is obvious. The letters of the name זמרא are equivalent to the number 248. This made the scribe think of the term רמ"ח, and further induced him to let Rabbi Jose ben Zimra also express an opinion on the subject of the 248 members of the body.

This list of examples illustrating the use of paronomasia in Midrash and Talmud may be enriched by several others. The instances, selected by me, were taken indiscriminately from diverse passages. They suffice, I believe, to prove that the method of recording the names of sages, especially those in the haggadic writings, is not to be judged by a strictly historical standard, and that their sayings are not to be regarded as directly received from the lips of those to whom they are attributed.